

## BRIEFS

### NAVY CHAPLAIN STAYS IN SERVICE

GOOSE CREEK, S.C. (BP) — The attorney for a longtime chaplain who survived an attempt to force him out of the U.S. Navy said the decision marks a victory for everyone who believes in religious liberty. "This is a case where a commanding officer sought to punish and prematurely end (Wesley Modder's) career because of his religious expression and beliefs," said Mike Berry, senior counsel for the Dallas-based Liberty Institute. Modder, who reached the 20-year mark for his military service in August, had faced possible dismissal. His commanding officer said Modder had failed to show tolerance and discriminated against sailors of different faiths.

### SECOND TIME A CHARM IN ARK

FAYETTEVILLE, Ar. (BP) — Fayetteville, Ar., citizens voted by a slim margin Sept. 8 to ratify the city's Uniform Civil Rights Protection ordinance that protects the rights of the LGBT community. Originally passed by the city council June 16, the law is a revised version of a law the council passed in August 2014 that was repealed by a popular vote last December. The Democrat-Gazette also reported the law would create a seven-member Civil Rights Commission to review complaints covered by the ordinance.

### FACILITIES USAGE CONSULT AVAILABLE

In light of the U.S. Supreme Court's June 26 decision legalizing same sex marriage nationwide, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) is offering a Facilities Usage Policy consultation to churches in friendly cooperation with the convention. The consultation includes an in-house visit from trained MBCB personnel and written materials. There is no charge for the consultation. For more information or to schedule a consultation, call the MBCB Church Growth Division at (601) 292-3310, or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1851, ext. 310. E-mail: sbell@mbcb.org.

## Analysis: Refugee crisis response needed

By Travis Wussow  
Correspondent

Turkey's shores received the body of three-year-old Aylan Kurdi minutes after a small boat capsized while carrying him into the Mediterranean Sea in early September with his father, mother, four-year-old brother, and other refugees from the Syrian Civil War.

They left with hope of finding safety and security in the West. Instead, Aylan and his brother became two of more than 11,000 children killed as a result of the war, as recounted in a Washington Post report on Sept. 5.

The so-called Islamic State continues to wreak havoc in Syria and across the region, its campaign of terror emanating from Raqqa, Syria, its de facto capital.

The world is presented with the worst refugee crisis since World War II. Nearly eight million Syrians have been internally displaced, and nearly four million Syrians have fled the country in search of safety.

As Christians, we know that we must respond, and yet the situation in Syria is paralyzingly complex. We don't know what to do. We're afraid to act because we are unsure of the long-term consequences. We don't know which organizations to trust. For today, here are some ways you can begin to respond:

see CRISIS on p. 9



**FLEEING FROM STRIFE** — Refugee families from the Greater Syria region of the Middle East sort through bags of donated clothing at the Keleti Train Station in Budapest, Hungary, while awaiting permission to board trains to their hoped-for final destination of Germany. The Syrian civil war and encroaching ISIS forces have driven out hundreds of thousands of people who are now flooding into the West in search of a better life. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

## Could nuke deal open doors to Gospel?

WASHINGTON (BP) — Though the White House has secured sufficient congressional support for the Iran nuclear deal to ensure its implementation, Southern Baptist leaders continue to warn the accord could facilitate Islamic terrorism.

A Southern Baptist seminary faculty member describes the deal as a "misstep," but noted God may use it nonetheless to facilitate Gospel witness in Iran.

Egypt-born Ayman Ibrahim, assistant professor of Islamic studies at Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., has criticized the deal and told BP the agreement would have "various political and economic consequences," but still

could be used by God to open doors for the Gospel.

"I do believe that God is sovereign and there will be good out of the deal," Ibrahim said in written comments. "In a sense, there will be a 'natural' exchange with Iran, in which our Gospel-bearers will be able to access a three-decade blocked country."

"In such exchange, we will be also able to bring our valuable pieces of Good News to the heart of the most important Shiite land."

This social and religious exchange is important to think about. With Iran being open to the international community, I believe and hope, there will be serious attempts for her to present a new image that, in a certain

level, may involve tolerance in treating non-Muslims and the other minorities."

As political leaders debate the Iran deal, they must "acknowledge and be convinced that we are not dealing only with a mere 'secular' country," Ibrahim said.

"Iran is a Muslim nation. She is proud of her Shiite identity, and serious about it. Iran wants to advance and consolidate power with one eye on its flourishing and the other on its Sunni rivals in the region (like Saudi Arabia)," Ibrahim said.

"For them, Islam is both religion and state. It is worship and leadership. This ideology drives their debates, negotiations, and deals. While political leaders, I believe, make every effort to make

see DEAL on p. 9

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Another one for the list

**Y**ou may have missed it, as I did, but apparently the end of the world began, well, last week.

Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, otherwise known as Mormons, have been stockpiling food and otherwise preparing for the Apocalypse in late September as predicted by popular Mormon author Julie Rowe (popular with Mormons, anyway).

According to news media sources including the Salt Lake Tribune, Rowe is basing her prophecy on the Jewish High Holy Days that started on Sept. 13. Mix in a little shemithah (look it up yourself), a "blood moon" on Sept. 28, predictions of financial collapse, U.N. troops, and the time of tribulation from the Bible, and you've got a full-scale panic among some Mormons and their outliers.

Rowe could be characterized by reasonable people as simply the latest entry on the list of seers who thought they could read the mind of God. They couldn't. To prove that last point, let's review:

■ Harold Egbert Camping, an obscure radio and Internet evangelist and dedicated numerologist from Oakland, Ca., got it wrong not once, but twice. The Rapture didn't occur on May 21, 2011, as he so boldly predicted. He did manage to frighten a lot of mixed-up folks, however, with his latest Judgment-Day-is-upon-us campaign, so much so that some people, according to The Washington Post, spent their life savings helping promote Camping's prediction. At least one person turned down a medical school admission so she could prepare for Christ's Second Coming.

Alas, it didn't happen. "I hope that Rev. Harold Camping is right that Jesus and Judgment Day are coming on May 21 — Maranatha — even now, come Lord Jesus!" Steve Lemke, provost of New Orleans Seminary at the time, told Baptist Press a few days before the prediction was to pass.

Referencing both 1 Corinthians 16:22 and Revelation 22:20, Lemke said, "However, he is probably wrong, as he has been wrong before. Since Scripture tells us that no one knows the day and hour of Christ's return (Matthew 24:36 and Mark 13:32), Camping's prediction makes May 21 one of the least likely days for the return of Christ."

Camping, who died at the age of 92 in December 2013, also calculated that the world as we know it would end in September 1994. Apparently, it didn't.

The web site for Family Radio, the name of Camping's ministry, stated at the time that he received a B.S. degree in Civil Engineering from the University of California at Berkeley in 1942 and went into the construction business. He and his family were lifelong members of the Christian Reformed Church until the year 1988. He sold his business and became a full-time volunteer employee of Family Radio, where he eventually presided as president and general manager.

The web site claimed Camping's program was broadcast on more than 140 stations owned by the company in the U.S., but the web site listed only Internet transmissions. There was no way to determine whether his apocalyptic program was ever broadcast in Mississippi.

■ William Miller (1782-1849), an American Baptist preacher, utilized Old Testament prophecies to predict the Rapture would occur during October 1844. The failure of Jesus to appear as Miller predicted became known as the Great Disappointment, and many believers fell away because of it. Undaunted, Miller followed up with another Rapture prediction that also turned out not to be true.

■ Many of us are old enough to remember the uproar caused by former NASA engineer Edgar Whisenant (1932-2001), who wrote 88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988. So confident was Whisenant that he was widely quoted as saying, "Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong." He was, and the Bible isn't.

When his prediction did not compel Jesus to return that year, Whisenant issued other pronouncements that Christ would return in 1989, 1993, and 1994. Thus, Whisenant became the biggest loser in the annals of Rapture prognosticators.

David Allen, dean of Southwestern Seminary's school of theology at the time, told Baptist Press in 2011 that when faced with Jesus' words and Camping's latest contradictory claims, he'll trust Jesus.

"Jesus said no one knows the day or the hour of His return. I suspect Jesus knows more about this than anyone from Family Radio. I find it is always better to trust the Bible on these things than people who do and say things directly contradictory to the Bible."

In the times in which we live, that sounds like good advice for all of us to remember.

## The joy of fishing

**T**here's no greater joy than winning someone else to Christ. Outside our own personal salvation, it's the greatest joy we can know. I've come to the conclusion that when we get serious about sharing our faith, and we ask God to help us get ready, He will put fish in our net. As Jesus said, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19).

What does it take? I don't do a lot of fishing for real fish, but I do know that if you want to be a fisherman, you've got to have three things: a strong net, lots of dedication and patience and, of course, a body of water containing fish.

The net is the Gospel itself. The Apostle Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes" (Romans 1:16), but how do we present the Gospel?

It helps to have a specific plan and pattern. Even if you only know one Bible verse, don't underestimate what will happen as you share it. So, memorize John 3:16. Learn the Romans Road (Romans 3:23; 6:23; 5:8; 10:13; 10:9, 10).

Fishing also takes dedication and patience. Don't be discouraged if it's hard at first. Find a way of sharing Christ with others, and trust God with the results. Sometimes we can witness by giving a Bible to a soldier, sending a book to a relative, inviting a neighbor to church or taking a friend to an evangelistic event. Sometimes the glow on our faces and the lifestyle we exhibit contributes to our witness.

Pastor and evangelist R. A. Torrey once said, "I waited and watched 15 long years to get my chance with one man. Never a day passed for all those 15 years that I did not speak to God about that man. At last my chance came, and it was my privilege to lead him to Christ. He afterwards became a preacher of the Gospel, and is now in heaven... When you undertake to bring a man to Christ, never give up."

In a sermon about being fishers for men, British pastor Charles Spurgeon observed, "The fishers are up at dawn. At day-break, our fishermen off the Doggerbank are fishing, and they continue fishing till late in the afternoon. As long as hands can work, men will fish. May the Lord Jesus make us hard-



### Guest opinion

with David Jeremiah

working, persevering, unwearied fishers of men! If Christ has caught us, we must catch others."

Be persistent, and never give up casting out that net.

The last thing you need is fish. That's not a big problem. We live in a world of over seven billion of them with more being born every day. We just need to recognize the opportunities.

Former Southwestern Seminary President Lee Scarborough once addressed a conference on evangelism in Chicago. During a break in the services, he went over to speak with a young stenographer who had been hired to transcribe the conference sessions.

Steering the conversation toward spiritual matters, Scarborough learned she wasn't a Christian. In a few minutes, he had the joy of winning her to Christ.

At the next session, he invited the woman to the platform to make a public confession of her faith and he prayed for her. Present were hundreds of people who wanted to be evangelists, but only Scarborough had recognized the fish in their own private pond — a fish they were even paying to be present.

Has God placed a fish in your private pond? Jesus promised that if we follow Him, He will make us fishers of men. If we aren't fishing, we may not be following and if we are following, sooner or later we'll be fishing. Why not begin now with this old prayer:

Lord, lay some soul upon my heart  
And love that soul through me;  
That I may humbly do my part  
To win that soul to Thee.

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# Platt: retirement incentive 'generous as possible'

**RICHMOND, Va. (BP)** — In the first phase of the International Mission Board (IMB) plan to address revenue shortfalls, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) agency's leadership announced details of a voluntary retirement incentive during town hall meetings with personnel on Sept. 10.

The goal of the plan, IMB leaders shared, is to offer as generous a voluntary retirement incentive as possible while honoring the years of service of those eligible and providing smooth transitions for personnel from their current roles.

IMB will offer the voluntary retirement incentive to all eligible staff and active career missionaries age 50 and older, with five or more years of service as of Dec. 31, 2015. For a missionary couple to be eligible for the incentive, only one spouse is required to meet the qualifications.

## Generous

"Our desire in all of this is to be as generous as possible to as many people as possible,"

IMB President David Platt said.

"Since we are asking everyone in the organization to pray and discern if the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, we know that 50-year-olds, for example, are going to be doing exactly that and if the Lord leads them to make a transition, we want to provide for them as generously as possible."

We want this to be a picture of honor for past service in mission, as well as future service in mission. I am trusting that just as God has mightily used brothers and sisters through the IMB in the past, He has plans to use them mightily beyond the IMB in the future, far beyond what any of us can ask or imagine."

## Details

Sebastian Traeger, IMB executive vice president, presented specific details of the plan, which includes a base retirement package, a bonus incentive complete with financial and medical considerations, specific provisions for smooth transition, and additional benefits beyond the scope of a standard retirement package.

Personnel who voluntarily elect to accept the incentive will finalize their decisions in early December. Those with greater than 15 years of service will be given "emeritus" status to honor their years of service.

Not all missionaries will choose to transition to the U.S. Some may choose to stay on the



PLATT



**(ABOVE) INCENTIVE DETAILED** — Rodney Freeman (right), vice president for support services at the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention, fields questions inside the board's Richmond, Va., headquarters from staff regarding the voluntary retirement incentive to be offered by IMB in the near future. Also sitting on the Q&A panel were IMB officers (from left) Clyde Meador, executive advisor to the president; David Platt, president; and Sebastian Traeger, executive vice president. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)

**COOL BREAK** — In a remote village in the Amazon region, a missionary family unnamed for security reasons sits outside to enjoy the cool breeze of late afternoon. The International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention has announced a voluntary retirement incentive that will cull 600-800 IMB employees from the ranks of both office staff and field personnel. (BP photo courtesy of IMB)



field as volunteers, through alternative pathways or through employment options.

"If you're in a scenario where you would like to stay on the field, by all means, we want to help you to do that," Traeger told missionaries, noting personnel transitioning to volunteer status would be allowed to use their housing and vehicles through the end of January 2016.

IMB will provide a transition team to serve every person who chooses to take the incentive. Missionaries will be given a transition grant to accommodate their adjustment. Also, local churches, seminaries, and state conventions have contacted IMB offering to help missionaries transitioning back to the U.S. and committing to pray for IMB during this time of transition.

The retirement incentive information was shared in two segments during the town hall meetings: first to missionary personnel, who mostly attended via electronic communication and then in person and online to staff, who are mostly based in IMB headquarters in Richmond. The two meeting times allowed leadership to convey specific details that pertain to each group.

The incentive originally was announced during an Aug. 27 town

hall meeting when IMB leaders laid out a plan to address IMB's revenue shortfalls and complete a reset of the organization.

## 'Most viable option'

Platt said since the Aug. 27 meeting, he has repeatedly heard people ask why IMB would ask seasoned missionaries to leave the field instead of freezing (or decreasing) the number of new missionaries to be sent in the next two years. Platt said after much prayer and discussion, leadership concluded their current plan is the most viable option amidst a variety of non-ideal options.

Platt noted four specific reasons why IMB is not freezing or further decreasing the number of new missionaries now.

First, "every type of person in the IMB is important," Platt stressed, including long-termers and short-termers, staff and missionaries, younger personnel and older personnel, new missionaries and seasoned missionaries.

"For this reason, I don't want any particular type of person in the IMB to step aside from service. That is why I have wanted to call every single person within the IMB to put a blank check on the table and to ask, 'Is the Lord

leading me to a new phase of involvement in mission?'"

Platt reiterated the retirement incentive is only Phase One of leadership's plan to address revenue shortfalls. Part of Phase Two will be an opportunity for anyone working at IMB to voluntarily indicate that God is leading him or her to a new place of involvement in mission outside the IMB.

Secondly, IMB leadership stresses they want the initial steps of the plan to be voluntary.

"I want to be crystal clear: we are not asking people to leave the field," Platt said. "If someone is thriving on the field and senses the Lord leading them to stay on the field, then I trust they will stay on the field."

"Again, I believe this bears repeating for the sake of clarity: in these initial steps, we are not asking anyone to leave the IMB. Instead, we are asking everyone to pray about whether or not the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, and we are providing an avenue for people to voluntarily leave the IMB if they sense the Lord leading them to do so."

The voluntary nature of the plan also applies to new missionaries the IMB already has committed to send in 2015 and 2016. "We did not want to say

to those new missionaries, 'You don't have a choice,'" Platt said. "In light of our commitment to them, we want to give them the same voluntary choice we're giving everyone else."

Thirdly, sending people through IMB "is born out of a conviction that new missionaries being sent from churches through the IMB is a foundational, non-negotiable part of who we are and what we do," Platt said, noting if IMB were to freeze sending new missionaries, within three years IMB would have zero apprentices or journeyman on the field.

"Further, regarding the SBC, the IMB foundationally exists to serve SBC churches by facilitating the sending of missionaries from those churches," Platt said. "The less people we send, the fewer churches we serve. The fewer churches we serve, the more we forsake one of our primary foundations."

A decline in sending missionaries historically results in a decline in IMB's relationship with SBC churches, Platt said. He also noted that of the approximately 300 new missionaries IMB has planned to send in 2015 and 2016, respectively, more than half of that number includes short-term missionaries.

Among those 300 missionaries, only 135 of them will be long-term. That number is approximately one-third of the long-term missionaries IMB sent a decade ago.

Fourth, cutting or freezing new missionary sending wouldn't address IMB's immediate need to fix its long-term cost structure. IMB must get to a place of short-term financial responsibility and long-term financial sustainability, Platt said, and simply freezing the number of new missionaries for the next two years will not solve that problem.

## Adjustments

However, he added, IMB may need to make adjustments in the number of new missionaries sent in the future.

"I would prefer not to make such adjustments, but this is where I'm reminded that I would prefer not to make any of these adjustments we're making," Platt said. "My preference is not to stop sending new missionaries to the field, and my preference is not to see existing missionaries leave the field."

"As I've mentioned at different points, the path we are walking is not ideal in any way, but after much prayer and discussion, other leaders and I believe the path we are walking is the best option we can take in a sea of non-ideal options available to us."

IMB will continue to post updates, including frequently asked questions and answers, online on IMB.org, he said.

Not everyone but most people eventually will grow up. It may take a little time, detour, down some unusual paths and even require digging out of a few ditches in order to get there but people grow up. I recently was in one of our fine churches to preach on Sunday morning. At the close of the service I was greeting the folks who had been there for the worship service and meeting some new people and enjoying seeing some faces from long ago.

A lady who came by asked me an interesting question. She wanted to know if when I was in elementary school if people called me Jimmy. I answered her that they did. I do not know when or where or why people started calling me Jim rather than Jimmy but it happened somewhere along the journey of junior high to high school years. Then she asked me, "Were you in Mrs. Aldridge's class in the fourth grade in elementary school?" "That would be me," I said. At that point, this sweet lady said, "Well, I thought that was you. You sat behind me in the fourth grade."

At that point I wondered what in the world I might have done or said that she remembered about me being in the fourth grade and sitting behind her. To our knowledge we had not seen or heard from each other since the days in the fourth or fifth grade and to the best of my knowledge, that had to have been twenty years ago. She then told me that she and another one of our classmates had been talking that week. She said she was coming to hear me preach and the two girls were remembering me from fourth grade as a cute little blonde headed boy who was so so shy. I told her, "Well, it's pretty obvious that the



## Eventually We Grow Up

cute ain't there and I'm not blonde headed anymore." We laughed and she said, "Well, I could not believe that that was you when you got up and started preaching the way you did." I told her I'm still shy and slightly withdrawn but that I have grown up some over the years.

I did not tell her but I have been in the ministry now over fifty-one years. I was thinking that in almost six decades people do change and they do grow up and they do exhibit new qualities. Today, I probably do speak with considerably more volume, maybe more confidence and authority, maybe with more energy than I did in the fourth grade. I may not be, but I hope that I'm a little bit improved in public speaking over my fourth grade presentations.

As I pause and look back, this whole panoramic view of much of my life I thought about how things change and how they stay the same. For one thing, I

thought about we do change, but we don't change. We study, learn, think, travel, are affected by those around us and the skies above us, but in another sense, the basic person that we are and much of the character that we become stays the same.

Oh, I know that there are radical things that can happen that change everything about you — tragedies that strike, wars that intervene, and maybe glorious encounters with God that give us a new direction. Still there are personality traits and qualities of character that stay in place throughout our lifetime which caused me to think about the reality that the most important changes that ever take place in us are the spiritual events and at a level where only God comes and intervenes in our lives. How we allow God to have His way. The ways in which we trust Him, communicate with Him, and allow Him access to our

deepest crevices in our hearts with the things that truly make a difference. For some it was like a Damascus Road experience, not at all unlike the Apostle Paul who so dramatically came to know Jesus and from that day on would give Him all the way the rest of his life.

For others it may have been a "come to Jesus" kind of moment as Peter experienced in John 21 when Jesus asked, "Do you love me?" (v. 15)? What is it in your life that you love more than Jesus and how do you respond when the Lord Himself says, "Do you love me?" Those kinds of changes can be dramatic, immediate, so profound that your relationships and the radiance in your face and on your life will be noticeable. That said, the truth is that only God can truly bring changes in any one of us.

Maybe you have already experienced the wonder of God's grace that can make a difference and maybe someone of you reading this article recognizes that you need God to do something marvelous in your life. Simply growing up past the fourth grade, gaining weight, losing hair, advancing past fourth grade academics does not mean that you really have come to maturity in the Lord. There may be in each of us today things that God still wants to change, improve, point us in a new direction so that our lives will become more fruitful and more fit for the kingdom of God. People do grow up, but allow God today, this very day, to do something in you that He may have been prodding and probing to do for a long time and you just haven't let Him. It is time to grow up.

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## Indian Christians being coerced to convert to Hinduism

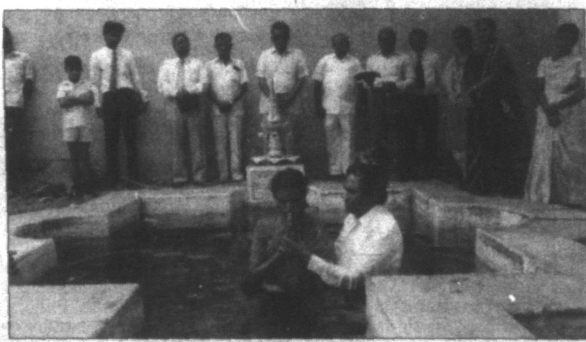
**NEW DELHI (BP)** — Heightened hostilities against Christians in India that began late last year have continued through the summer, with Hindu extremists threatening Christians and forcing them to "reconvert" to Hinduism, church leaders said.

In Rajasthan state in the northwest, 10 Christian families in Nakhnool village, near Alwar, have fled after intolerant Hindus harassed and threatened to kill them, area church leaders said.

"Since June 27, we have not been able to have any kind of worship meetings," area pastor Malkeet Singh told Morning Star News, a California-based independent news service focusing on the persecution of Christians worldwide. "The extremists threatened to harm us if we utter the name of Christ or conduct any Christian meetings."

Tensions grew on July 19 when members of the Hindu extremist Shiv Sena, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the village held a "homecoming" to Hinduism (Ghar Vapsi) in front of Pastor Pratap Singh's house.

About 600 people gathered in front of Pastor Singh's house, put up the idol of the Hindu god Hanuman, forced Pastor Singh and 10 family members to worship the idol and forced him to sign a paper which said, "I am willing to be a Hindu," said Ra-



**RIISING TENSIONS** — Baptisms taking place in Hyderabad, one of India's largest cities, reflect the growing Christian presence in India but also the dangerous friction developing with the larger and predominant non-Christian religions that wield tremendous social and political power. (BP photo)

jamman Johnson, regional secretary of the Friends Missionary Prayer Band (FMPB).

"They forced them to drink water procured from the Ganga River and put kunikum [red marks] on their foreheads to show that they were now Hindus," Johnson said.

As the Hindu extremists had threatened to kill him if he continued to lead worship meetings, Pastor Singh had been in hiding for a month. The extremists found him and took him to his house for the ritual, Johnson said.

"The extremists had been following the movement of Pastor

Singh closely for a long time, and then they dragged him back from his hiding place to forcefully convert him along with 10 members of his family to Hinduism in an hour-long Ghar Vapsi ceremony," he said.

Pastor Singh, who had been ministering in the village for 15 years, began receiving death threats around Christmas last year, church leaders said. Hindu extremists undertook a series of largely bogus, forced conversion ceremonies during the Christmas season after the BJP-led coalition government of Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi took office in May 2014.

"The extremists boldly claimed that they were the ruling [BJP] party in the state, and that they can stop whatever they like," Johnson said. "The support they get from the police and the village head emboldened their actions."

Anil Masih, another area Christian leader, told Morning Star News that Christians in the village have stopped meeting and are living in fear.

"The extremists threatened to socially boycott the Christians if they continue to worship Christ and threatened to kill them if they submit a police complaint against anyone," he said.

About seven miles away in Narpur village, Hindu extremists on June 28 held a "reconversion" ritual in which 50 Christians were forcefully converted to Hinduism, said Johnson of the FMPB.

"The Hindu extremists collected 50 Christians from Nakhnool, Kota and Nikkach villages and conducted a Ghar Vapsi on the land of the FMBP, and the extremists further threatened to kill and cut the Christians into pieces if they ever go back to church again," he said.

In Bandholi, about nine miles from Nakhnool village, Hindu extremists secretly planned to demolish the FMPB building on July 18, he said, adding they also threatened to harm the family of

local evangelist Malkeeth Singh. Christian leaders approached the Alwar superintendent of police, and as a result the extremists abandoned plans to destroy the church building.

They continued to threaten to kill the Christians, however, if they hold worship meetings in the area.

In Maharashtra state on India's western coast, Hindu extremists since July 19 have been massing to stop village Christians from worshipping.

"On every Sunday for more than a month now, around 100 Hindu extremists gathered near where we are conducting Sunday meetings and threatened to harm some of our church members if they continue to attend the prayer meetings," said Pastor Benjamin Gomes of New Life Grace Ministries in Pinguli village, Kudal, Sindhughurh. "Even the village head told us to stop the meeting."

The extremists submitted a police complaint against the Christians, alleging forced conversion. Police later summoned the Christians and told them to stop meeting, but church members went to the police station and told officers that they attended the church of their own free will and said there was no forceful conversion or defaming of Hindu gods, said the Rev. Anand Chougule, an area pastor.



# North Korea again persecuting Christians

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — The adoption of a resolution by messengers to this summer's annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention in Columbus, Ohio, regarding "religious persecution and human rights violations in North Korea," has coincided with what the resolution's originator calls a renewed international challenge to the nation.

The watchdog group Open Doors has named North Korea as the world's worst persecutor of Christians for the past 13 years, and estimates that the communist totalitarian regime run by ruthless dictator Kim Jong Un may have recently forced 50,000-70,000 Christians into political prison camps.

The SBC resolution notes that "an estimated 200,000 to 400,000 Christians in North Korea remain at grave risk of persecution."

Daniel Aum, a messenger to the Columbus meeting who submitted the resolution's initial draft to the SBC Resolutions Committee, told Baptist Press there has been "a tremendous momentum swing" related to North Korea among U.S. and foreign leaders.

Aum, an attorney and fellow at the Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights in Washington, D.C., said the SBC resolution has been presented to members of the U.S. Congress as they consider legislation calling for investigation and sanction of North Korea's human rights violations.

The name of the congressional bill is the North Korea Sanctions Enforcement Act of 2015 (H.R. 757).

"Discussion in the U.S. and around the world was primarily focused on the North Korean nuclear question," said Aum, but a 2014 report on North Korea by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry has "galvanized the U.S. government. It's galvanized the South Korean government. It's moved the international community."

Nine areas of human rights abuses in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, as North Korea prefers calling itself, were documented in the Report of the U.N. Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights and referenced Aum's SBC resolution. Those abuses include torture and inhumane treatment, arbitrary arrest, and detention and violations of the right to life.

The "landmark report," Aum said, "elevated the North Korean human rights issue to a place where it can no longer be denied" or "discounted." In its emphasis on human rights, Aum said the report has become "one of the more effective weapons to apply pressure to North Korea."

North Korea exhibited a "dramatically new approach" following the report's release by saying it "accepted" some previous U.N. human rights recommendations, according to 38 North, a website devoted to analysis of North Korea, which noted the nation's prior refusal "to accept any of the proffered recommendations for improving human rights... made by other governments."

Two Americans accused of anti-state crimes against North Korea — Kenneth Bae, who had been held for two years, and Jeffrey Fowle, who had been held for six months — were freed several months after the U.N. report's publication.

A report by the George W. Bush Institute in Dallas called the U.N. report "a manifestation of the growing global awareness of the magnitude of human injustice in North Korea." After decades of regarding human rights

discussion as "at best, a distraction, or at worst, a detriment to denuclearization negotiations," U.S. officials "should consider a Rights Up-Front approach in [their] negotiations with North Korea," according to the Bush Institute report.

"Pressing on human rights may actually elicit cooperation from the North on the nuclear issue as a way for Pyongyang to deflect pressure," the Bush Institute added.

SBC messengers, in the resolution adopted during the convention's annual meeting in Columbus, Ohio, "appeal[ed] to [dictator] Kim Jong Un and the government of North Korea to respect and ensure human rights for all individuals as obligated both by biblical teaching and the international covenants to which it is a State Party."

The resolution "urge[d] President Barack Obama and both houses of the U.S. Congress to do all they can to pressure the government of North Korea to respect the dignity and religious freedom of all its citizens" and called for prayer "that God will turn the heart of Kim Jong Un to Himself and that President Kim might grant to all the people of North Korea the respect they deserve as God's creation."



**KIM JONG UN**



**AUM**



**GRAVE RISK** — Open Doors has named North Korea as the world's worst persecutor of Christians for the past 13 years, and estimates that the communist totalitarian regime may have recently forced 50,000-70,000 Christians into political prison camps.

Aum said North Korea's torture of political prisoners has included pulling out their fingernails, pouring boiling water down their throats, burning them, and forcing pregnant women to have abortions up to the ninth month of gestation. Repeat offenders can face immediate execution by firing squad, he said.

Charles Armstrong, a professor of Korean history at Columbia University in New York City, told Baptist Press (BP) in written comments, "Christians seem to be particular targets of oppression, not so much because the regime is anti-religion (although that is part of it) but because Christianity is closely associated with the American enemy."

The North Korean constitution "guarantees freedom of religion, believe it or not, but this freedom is secondary to national security — and Christianity almost by definition is a national security risk, from the North Korean government's point of view," Armstrong, who was raised in a Southern Baptist church, said in written comments.

"This is especially ironic," Armstrong continued, "because the founding leader of North Korea, Kim Jong Un's grandfather

Kim Il Sung, was raised in a devout Presbyterian household and [the North Korean capital city of] Pyongyang was once the center of Protestant Christianity in all of Korea."

Armstrong advocated support of relief organizations that deliver food and medicine to needy North Koreans but "in the long run," he said, "only a fundamental change in the political system can resolve the human rights problem."

Paul Kim, Asian American adviser to the SBC Executive Committee in Nashville, told BP he prays that the Christian missions movement can make strategic inroads as it shares the Gospel with lost North Korean citizens.

"There is no freedom, and there is persecution" in North Korea, said Kim, pastor emeritus of Antioch Church in Cambridge, Ma. "That's the reality of North Korea and China. There is always persecution. Christians are underground."

Aum recommends that American believers concerned for North Korea raise awareness within their circles of influence, pray, and ask their members of Congress to pressure North Korea to stop violating human rights.

## Kentucky clerk jailed for marriage stand is released

**ASHLAND, Ky. (BP)** — Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis was freed from jail Sept. 8 by the same federal judge who had earlier imprisoned her on contempt of court charges for declining to process a marriage license for a homosexual couple.

U.S. District Judge David Bunning in Ashland, Ky., ordered Davis' release after he became convinced the deputy clerks in her Rowan County office had obeyed his order to issue

marriage licenses to same sex couples, the Louisville Courier-Journal reported. He ordered Davis to jail Sept. 3 when she again refused to comply with his previous order to grant licenses.

In a two-page order, Bunning said Davis' release was on the condition she not "interfere in any way, directly or indirectly, with the efforts of her deputy clerks to issue marriage licenses to all legally eligible couples,"

according to the newspaper. He would consider "appropriate sanctions" if Davis interferes, Bunning said.

Davis' jailing is the latest repercussion from the U.S. Supreme Court's June 26 decision legalizing same sex marriage nationwide. Citing her Christian beliefs about marriage, Davis halted the issuance of licenses from her office to all couples after the opinion.

The Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling in June heightened concerns among religious liberty promoters regarding the

threat legalized gay marriage poses to Christian individuals and institutions, as well as other defenders of biblical, traditional marriage.

The opinion prompted some county clerks to resign their jobs rather than issue licenses to gay couples, while others have held onto their jobs while refusing to provide licenses. In the private sector, some businesses were closed even before the Supreme Court ruling as a result of the owners' refusal to compromise their belief that marriage is only between a man

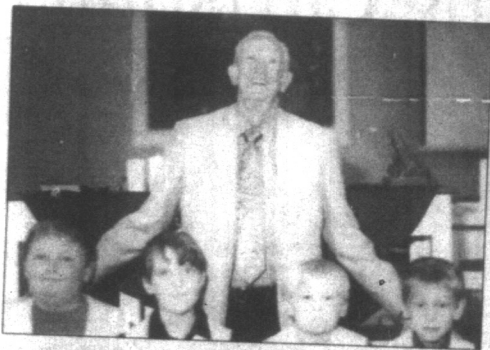
and a woman. Wedding vendors including florists, photographers and bakers have been especially vulnerable in states where same sex marriage was already legal.

Davis, a Democrat, has been described in news reports as an Apostolic Christian. She actively participates in her church and leads a weekly Bible study at a local jail, according to a legal document filed with the federal court. She has been married four times, three of which occurred before her conversion to Christianity.



**DAVIS**

## Just for the Record



**KREOLE AVENUE CHURCH, MOSS POINT,** held Royal Ambassador induction Aug. 30. Shown are Kylie Roberson, Christopher Babilon, Joshua Luna, George Babilon, and pastor Don Womble.



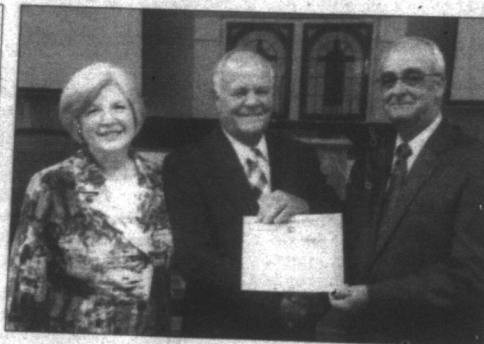
**NORTH RIPLEY CHURCH, BENTON - TIPPAH ASSOCIATION,** recently licensed Kenny Harrison to the ministry. Shown are Harrison and pastor Chris Lewellen.



**BUNKER HILL CHURCH, COLUMBIA,** held a note burning service July 26 for their new sanctuary. Shown are Ricky Dyess, Tim Buckley, pastor Randy Gardner, Ricky Ladner, and associate pastor Will Jordan.



The Children in Action of **HOPE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,** are shown with school supplies they collected for Christmas in August. Dennis Duvall, pastor.



**SPRING HILL CHURCH, WATERFORD,** ordained Vick Stilwell as deacon. Shown are Suzy Stilwell, Stilwell, and pastor John Parker.



**NEW HENLYFIELD CHURCH, CARRIERE,** presented a plaque to Era White during the church's homecoming, recognizing her for many years of service.



The preteens of **FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN,** traveled to summer camp in Texas. Tim Johnson, youth pastor; Jay Anderson, pastor.

### In other Church News:

► **Hickory Ridge Church, Florence,** is hosting an antique car and tractor show Sept. 19, beginning at 9 a.m. Live auction and concessions. For more information, visit [www.hickoryridgebaptist.org](http://www.hickoryridgebaptist.org).

► **Oak Grove Church, Smith County,** will hold a pastor appreciation day for pastor John Barnes, III, 11 a.m. Barnes has served as pastor for 25 years.

► **County Line Church, Ovett,** will host Crosby Lane in concert Sept. 25, 7 p.m. Love offering.

► **Cola Church, Carroll Association,** will host a fall festival Sept. 19, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. All day singing including the Cuomo Sisters, the Slatons, and the Promised Quartet, among others. Activities, games, food, etc.

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a person  
no matter  
how small

Dr. Seuss

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**OUR SPEAKER** *Sydna Massé*

• Founder of Ramah International, [www.ramahinternational.org](http://www.ramahinternational.org), a post-abortion recovery ministry  
• Focus on the Family Manager of Crisis Pregnancy Ministries (1991-1998)  
• Author, "Her Choice to Heal: Finding Spiritual and Emotional Peace After Abortion"



**GRACE CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,** held a blessing of the backpacks service. Chester Carlisle, pastor; Micheal Duke, student minister; Tim Moore, minister of music.



## Just for the Record



The youth of **NESHOBA CHURCH, UNION**, gave stuffed animals to Pioneer Hospital in Newton for sick children.



**SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION**, recently ordained Danny Emery and Jordon Brock as deacons. Shown are Emery, Tauny Emery, pastor Rusty Fair, Megan Brock, and Brock.

## College News



A dedication ceremony was held Sept. 3 for Futral Hall at **WILLIAM CAREY UNIVERSITY**. Shown is Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, cutting the ribbon for the men's residence hall which opened in August.



Mary McRae is the new Student Government Association president at **MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE** for 2015 - 16. An MC junior, she is a 21-year-old Tishomingo County resident.

### In other College News:

► **Mississippi College** was ranked at the 11th best value among the South's regional universities, according to a September 9 report in U.S. News and World Report.

► **William Carey University** was ranked as the #1 best value among the South's regional universities, according to a September 9 report in U.S. News and World Report.

## Staff Changes



**ANTIOCH CHURCH, MONTICELLO**, called James E. McKneely, Sr., as pastor May 17. He is shown with his wife Debbie.



**COURTLAND CHURCH, COURTLAND**, has called Kevin Brown as pastor.



**CENTRAL CHURCH, MCNEILL**, has called Hunter Williams as youth director.

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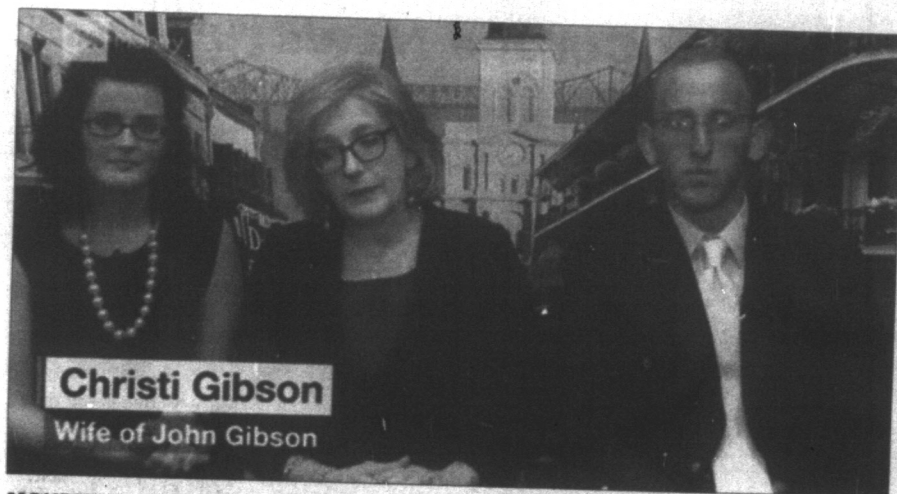
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**Christi Gibson**

Wife of John Gibson

**MOURNING HUSBAND, FATHER** — Christi Gibson (center) and her children Callie (left) and Trey discuss the suicide of their husband and father, New Orleans Seminary professor John Gibson, on CNN Sept. 9. John Gibson took his life after it was revealed that his name was on the hacked Ashley Madison list. (BP photo/CNN screen grab)

## Family of John Gibson openly discuss circumstances of death

**NEW ORLEANS (BP and local reports)** — The family of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) professor and Mississippi pastor John Gibson is calling his death a suicide connected to the Ashley Madison website hack.

By openly discussing the circumstances surrounding his death, including a CNN interview that aired Sept. 8, the surviving Gibsons hope to help other families find forgiveness and reconciliation.

Ashley Madison is the name of a profitable web site that boasted in its slogan, "Life is short. Have an affair," and offered to match partners willing to commit adultery. An anonymous group of hackers has claimed responsibility for acquiring the names and personal information of tens of millions of subscribers, and then publicly releasing the information.

John Gibson served for 17 years as a professor at Leavell College, New Orleans Seminary's undergraduate program. At the time of his death, he also served as pastor of First Church in Pearllington.

Gibson, 56, was discovered at his home on the seminary campus at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Aug. 24 by his wife Christi when she arrived home from work. After finding Gibson unresponsive, she immediately notified emergency medical service. EMS workers were unable to revive him, and Gibson was pronounced dead at the scene.

Gibson's son Trey spoke of all of his father's good qualities — his ability to preach, his servant heart, and his sense of humor — during an August 28 memorial service on the seminary campus. Trey also spoke of his father's secret struggles with depression and pornography, and acknowledged at the time of the memorial service that his father had taken his own life.

Trey encouraged the mourners to seek accountability relationships to guard against secret sin. "My dad was a great man. He was a great man with struggles. My dad reached a point of such hopelessness and despair that he took his own life."

While the news jolted the campus, the seminary community rallied around the Gibson family as they opened up about the struggles that led to the death of John Gibson. Seminary President Chuck Kelley touched on the subject again Sept. 8 during the NOBTS convocation chapel service.

"On the first day of classes, we had the unexpected death of a much loved professor, colleague and friend Dr. John Gibson," Kelley said. "We learned that he made some very sad and unfortunate choices in his life, and his son shared in his memorial service his death appeared to come at his own hand."

The family spoke openly about Gibson's death during a national television interview on CNN. Appearing in the interview with her children Trey and Callie, Gibson's wife Christi confirmed the existence of a suicide note in which her husband confessed to his failures and that his name had been released in the Ashley Madison website hack. Christi noted her

husband also expressed great sorrow for his actions.

In the CNN interview, the family acknowledged they would have been willing to forgive Gibson's failures and work toward restoration if they had been given a chance. "I still believe it could have been fixed. It could have been healed," Christi Gibson said.

"There is brokenness in every single one of us. We all have things that we struggle with," she said. "It wasn't so bad that we wouldn't have forgiven it, and so many people have said that to us, but for John, it carried with him such shame."

Christi also expressed her concern for other families grappling with the fallout from the Ashley Madison scandal. For the millions of families affected, she encouraged love and forgiveness. "These were real people with real families, real pain and real loss. Don't underestimate the power of love. Nothing is worth the loss of a father and a husband and a friend. It just didn't merit it."

Kelley asked for continued prayer for the Gibson family and the entire NOBTS community as they struggle with this loss and the circumstances behind it.

A group of students responded to the news of Gibson's suicide and the events that led to it by organizing a prayer initiative on campus.

Beginning Aug. 31, participants in the student-led prayer time met daily on the steps of Leavell Chapel to pray for the faculty and their families. The first week culminated with a joint student-faculty prayer time. After the Labor Day holiday, the student-led prayer meetings moved to a twice-weekly schedule.



**GIBSON**

## BIBL i O C I P H E R

CS ECKE CKEC KX SKU, DSE CVY CSKU

ICKE ECS HNVUVE HKVEC PXEL ECS

TCPUTCSH; CS ECKE LOSUTLYSEC

HCKDD XLE FS CPUE LA ECS HSTLXR

RSKEC.

USOSDKEVLX EIL: SDSOSX

Clue:  $\zeta = H$

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: 1 Timothy 4:1

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## MS POSITIONS

**YALOBUSHA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR (PART-TIME).** Email resumes to [glynnorris@bellsouth.net](mailto:glynnorris@bellsouth.net) by October 30, 2015.

**THE TRI-COUNTY BAPTIST MISSION (LAWRENCE, MARION, AND WALTHAM BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS) IS RECEIVING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR** through October 31, 2015. Resumes can be mailed to PO Box 350, Columbia MS 39429 (attention Executive Committee), or emailed to [tricitybaptist-missions@gmail.com](mailto:tricitybaptist-missions@gmail.com).

**GUNTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLORENCE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR.** Please submit resumes to Gunter Road Search Committee c/o Craig Dukes 2209 Woodland Place Florence, MS 39073 or [rodukes@bellsouth.net](mailto:rodukes@bellsouth.net).

**TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH IN VICKSBURG, MS IS SEEKING A YOUTH MINISTER.** Please send resumes to Trinity Baptist Church Search Committee, 3365 Porters Chapel Rd. Vicksburg, MS 39180 or email Charlie Harris at [C3harris@yahoo.com](mailto:C3harris@yahoo.com).

**THOMPSON BAPTIST CHURCH SMITHDALE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT.** Flexible scheduling, e-mail resume to [tbfinancial@yahoo.com](mailto:tbfinancial@yahoo.com).

**ENON BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH.** Send resumes to 2604 Carrollton Rd Grenada, MS 38901 or email to [enonbaptistchurch@outlook.com](mailto:enonbaptistchurch@outlook.com) or call 662-226-0778.

**TROY FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN PONTOTOC, MS IS SEEKING A PASTOR (FULL-TIME / BI-VOCATIONAL).** Send resumes to Troy First Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 145 Rock Hill Road, Pontotoc, MS 38863 or email to [Tommy@goldenchair.com](mailto:Tommy@goldenchair.com).

**BETHESDA BAPTIST CHURCH IN TERRY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER.** Please mail resumes to Bethesda Baptist Church, 13628 Midway Rd. Terry, MS 39170.

**BUCATUNNA BAPTIST CHURCH IN CLARKE COUNTY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR BI-VOCATIONAL OR FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Please send resumes to: 10806 CR514, Meridian, MS 39301



## DEAL

cont. from p. 1

sure the political deals are solid and strong, we cannot ignore this religious dimension in dealing with Iran."

Once the deal takes effect, Ibrahim said, "we need to be cautious and practice significant testing measures to make sure we are not too late in taking serious actions to stop an ambitious Iran."

He hopes Iran will "prove he is serious about being integrated in an international multi-religious and multi-cultural society" by "protecting the rights of minorities" as well as releasing American pastor Saeed Abedini and other American prisoners.

However, Congressman Steve Russell (R-Ok.) told Baptist Press Iran's bad behavior since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, including support for the murder of "thousands of Americans," suggest the nation's leaders will continue to sponsor terrorism.

Money and increased nuclear capacity stemming from the deal will exacerbate the problem, he said.

Iran "will use money to fund proxy wars," said Russell, a member of First Southern Baptist Church in Oklahoma City. He made a floor speech Sept. 8, in

which he explained how the Iranian government has allegedly supported the murder of Americans over four decades.

The deal will not promote religious liberty in Iran, Russell said, but rather strengthen "the hold of the Ayatollah and the Supreme Council and their lock on the people they dictate to."

Russell agreed with U.S. President Barack Obama that America should not attempt to tie the release of Abedini and other American prisoners in Iran to the nuclear deal. "You don't want to get in a situation where people that are held hostage can be blackmailed for nuclear concessions."

U.S. Sen. James Lankford (R-Ok.), a member of Quail Springs Church in Oklahoma City, said the nuclear deal would give Iran several important resources for developing a nuclear weapon: time to complete their research, money, ballistic missile capability, and the ability "to continue to ward highly enriched uranium."

"They are allowed to stockpile conventional weapons under this agreement and to be able to even add things like surface-to-air defense capabilities to be able to defend their military sites. So you tell me... does Iran have what it needs to be able to complete a nuclear weapon under this deal."

## CRISIS

cont. from p. 1

### Pray

Jesus tells us that if we knock the door will be opened, and if we have faith the size of a mustard seed mountains can be moved. The famed British preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon famously said that prayer is "the slender nerve that moves the muscle of omnipotence." Let us not believe that our prayers are too small a response to this crisis.

Here are some things for which to pray:

■ **Pray for a movement of the Gospel among the Syrian refugee community.**

■ **Pray for the hundreds of children like Aylans who will leave the shores of the Middle East in the coming days, weeks, and months. Pray for their safety and protection.**

■ **Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ who are working to care for the refugee communities around them.**

■ **Pray that God would open your eyes to ways that you can help ease the pain of those impacted by this conflict.**

### Partner

We know that it's hard to know which organizations on which to rely and that we can trust. Here is what Southern Baptist organizations are doing.

■ **Baptist Global Response:** In Syria, BGR is distributing food, hygiene items, blankets, and medicine to 2,500-4,000 refugee families as well as diapers and formula for families with young children.

■ **Global Hunger Relief:** 100% of any donation goes directly to meet hunger needs, because of the partnership with the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Baptist Global Response. Text "refugee" to 80888 to donate \$10 for Syrian refugees.

The following FAQ is reprinted from the Sept. 11 issue of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission's newsletter, *The Weekly*:

### Q: What is the Syria refugee crisis?

A: For the past four years, Syria has been in a civil war that has forced 11 million people — half the country's pre-crisis population — to flee their homes. Nearly seven million Syrians have been internally displaced within the country and four million have fled Syria for other countries.

The result is one of the largest forced migrations since World War II.

### Q: If this has been going on for years, why is this now in the news?

A: The images of the lifeless body of a three-year-old Syrian refugee captured the attention of the global media in early September. The child had drowned after the 15-foot boat ferrying him and his family from a Turkish beach resort to Greece capsized.

The images reignited a debate about whether the European Union and other Western countries were doing enough to aid refugees from the war-torn country.

### Q: How did this all start?

A: In 2011, during the Middle Eastern protest movement known as the Arab Spring, protesters in Syria demanded the end of Ba'ath Party rule and the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad, whose family has held the presidency in the country since 1971. In April 2011, the Syrian Army was sent to quell the protest and soldiers opened fire on demonstrators. After months of military sieges, the protests evolved into an armed rebellion that has spread across the country.

Although the conflict was originally between factions for and against President Assad, the civil war has broadened into a battle

between the country's Sunni Muslim majority against the president's Shia Alawite Muslim sect.

The conflict has drawn in neighboring countries and world powers and led to the rise of jihadist groups, including the self-proclaimed Islamic State.

### Q: What is the U.S. doing about the refugee crisis?

Since the start of the conflict, the U.S. has admitted 1,500 refugees from Syria. At a press briefing Sept. 10, White House Press Secretary John Earnest told reporters that the Obama administration is making plans to accept 10,000 Syrian refugees in the next budget year. (There is currently cap of 70,000 refugee visas a year that U.S. officials can issue.)

### Q: Where exactly is Syria located in the Middle East?

A: Syria is located north of the Arabian Peninsula at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The country, which is about the size of North Dakota, is bordered by Turkey on the north, Iraq on the east, Jordan on the south, and Lebanon, Israel, and the Mediterranean Sea on the west.

The country's biggest cities are Aleppo (population 2,301,570), and Damascus (population 1,711,000).

### Q: Isn't Syria one of the lands mentioned in the Bible?

A: The modern state of Syria is part of the region known throughout history as Greater Syria. The city of Damascus is mentioned 67 times in the Bible. The road to Damascus was the location of the Apostle Paul's conversion (Acts 9). Antioch was the city in which the disciples were first called Christians. (Acts 11:26).

Wussow is director of international justice and religious freedom for the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Commission (erlc.org) in Nashville. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 3 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

# THE VILLAGE VIEW



**Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director**

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## GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

**AUGUST 1-15, 2015**

### MEMORIALS

Ola Mae George  
Mr. & Mrs. Billy Barnett  
Thomas Graham  
New Home Baptist Church  
Janie R. Grantham  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Morris L. Gray  
Mr. & Mrs. Ricky Pullen  
Pete Grissom  
Mr. & Mrs. M. E. "Sonny" Newton  
Joel Gullaborn  
Dr. Milton Metaxas  
Mr. Lewis Hardy  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Rev. & Mrs. Johnny Parks  
Mrs. Lucy Harrell  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Andy Hester  
Mrs. Gerry McGraw  
Mike E. Hines  
Mrs. Michelle Alt  
Bobby Howe  
Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Breland  
Mrs. Chester (Jean) Hubbard  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E. Lofton  
Nina Hunt  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Mrs. Pat James  
Mrs. Louise S. Hisscox  
Patricia James  
Ms. Georgia Ziegler  
Rick & Christy (Lowery) English  
Randy & Amy (Lowery) Carroll  
Sweep King  
Daniel, Dianne & Alissa Smith  
Mrs. Jennie Knight  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
Charles Latham  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
John Lewis  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley

Dawna Watkins and Margaret Ashley  
Mr. & Mrs. Steve E. Janos  
Glenn McDill  
Mrs. Helen Brown  
Mrs. Frances McDonald  
Mr. & Mrs. Reece Douglas, Jr.  
Rev. Lester McNair  
Hazel Bridges & Carolyn Tullos  
Dennis R. McVay  
Mrs. Denise Farrar  
Evelyn Jean Mitchell  
Eddicton Baptist Church  
Marlene Mitchell  
Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Buchanan  
Mrs. Frances Morgan  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
Elder Wayne Myers  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles L. Grant  
Mr. & Mrs. Barney J. Albritton  
Alvin Newell  
Mrs. Marion H. Johnston  
John Noble Sr.  
Darlove Baptist Church  
R. H. Nunnerly  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
J.V. & Mary Parker  
Mr. & Mrs. Michael W. Parker  
Rick Parks  
Rev. & Mrs. Johnny Parks  
Lorraine Pigott  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Tony Porter  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Thad Potter  
Scooter & Teresa Henderson  
Taylor & Jenni Henderson  
Spence & Blair Pepper  
Edward Prisock  
Joe D. Crowson  
Irene Quin  
Mr. & Mrs. Barney J. Albritton  
Mrs. Bessie Ray  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Beverly Rials  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Keith Rials

Mr. & Mrs. Barney J. Albritton  
Justin Rippey  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Nelson Robison  
Mr. & Mrs. Terry E. Champion  
Eddie Russell  
Mrs. Ernestine M. Lindsley  
Rev. Roy Smith  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Jack Springs  
Mr. & Mrs. Barney J. Albritton  
G. B. Steele  
Mrs. Howard Conner  
M. J. Saucier  
Jimmy Strong  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Alexander  
Mrs. Peggy Tanner  
Rev. William B. Webb  
Jake Taylor  
Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Sisco  
Mr. Dennie Thurman  
Mr. & Mrs. Lester Haddox  
Freddie Townsend  
Mrs. Ollie Faye Jones  
Parker Voss  
Mr. & Mrs. Rudy Grenn  
Mrs. Glenda C. Fry  
Bubba Walters  
Mr. & Mrs. Jack McRee  
Mr. Cecil Washington  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas E. Lofton  
Rev. Robert E. Washington  
Mr. Frederick Duane Washington  
Mrs. Inez Westbrook  
Mr. & Mrs. Albert F. Dribben  
Nell White  
Bovina Baptist Church  
Dustin Wilkie  
Ms. Marie S. Graham  
Tammy Pounds & Clara Pounds  
Mr. David Williams  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Tyler Young  
Sr. Adult Women's SSC, First Baptist Church Maffhiston  
Wayne Young  
Daniel, Dianne & Alissa Smith

**AUGUST 16-31, 2015**

### HONORS

Mrs. Helen Alderman  
Ms. Nancy F. Patrick  
Sonny Avant  
Turkey Creek BC  
Jake Campbell  
Turkey Creek BC  
Daniel Duke  
Turkey Creek BC  
Mrs. Martha Ensign  
Ms. Nancy F. Patrick  
Bro. Johnny Parks  
Jerusalem BC  
Ted Pickett  
Rev. William B. Webb  
Mrs. Johnnie Taylor  
Ms. Nancy F. Patrick  
Alabel Wiser  
Dr. & Mrs. J. George Smith

**AUGUST 16-31, 2015**

### MEMORIALS

Linda Ackerman  
Mr. & Mrs. Krandal Howell  
V. C. "Pinkie" & Janie Ahlrich  
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas L. Ulm  
Paul Andrews  
Magnolia HS Class of 1950  
Barbara Ann Bishop  
Billy & Tanya Moore  
Rachael Lee Bond  
Mr. & Mrs. Alan C. Hurdle  
Rod Brasfield  
Jimmy & Bonnie Hollingsworth  
Mrs. Metree Breland  
Mr. & Mrs. Danny Reed

Mr. Bill Burchfield  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. Wayne Burchfield  
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Dew  
Gene Butler  
Billy & Tanya Moore  
Michael Butler  
Mr. & Mrs. Larry Lowery  
Mrs. Betty Lou Cain  
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Thomas  
Joseph Callahan  
Arlington Heights BC  
Mrs. Annie Camp  
Turkey Creek BC

Mr. Charles Carson  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Cecil Boswell's Mother  
Mrs. Irene B. Lancaster  
Mrs. Judy L. Clanton  
Mr. & Mrs. David Doss  
Mr. & Mrs. James E. Palmer  
Wayne Collins  
Arlington Heights BC  
Mr. John Culbreath  
Jim, Cindy & Ryan McCurdy  
Malcolm Culpepper  
Mr. & Mrs. Murray L. Scoggins

Mr. & Mrs. Ralph L. Carroll  
Mr. Thomas H. Martin  
Mrs. Alice Grisham  
Mr. Jimmy Daniels  
Rev. William B. Webb  
Mrs. Jack Eatherly  
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Taylor  
Mr. Carol Autry Festervand  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Alexander  
Mr. & Mrs. Jimmy Jenkins  
Darrell Forman  
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth W. Moss  
Keith Fortenberry  
Mr. & Mrs. Maurice Ingram

## SOCIAL SERVICES SECRETARY

The BCV has an immediate opening for an individual to fill the position of Social Services Secretary in the agency's headquarters in Ridgeland. The individual filling this position must be a mature Christian adult with personal integrity, Christian character and a sound reputation. This individual must also have a demonstrated commitment to the ethical standards incumbent upon each staff member of the BCV staff and an appreciation of the confidentiality extended to children and families served by the BCV. This individual must be able to deal with children and adults in a warm, accepting manner. The successful candidate must have a minimum of an associate's degree or equivalent, and training and experience in secretarial tasks and be proficient in general office computing tasks, specifically word processing, spreadsheet applications and data entry in various applications. Other significant responsibilities include phone coverage, extensive filing and significant interactions with members of the social service and clinical staff.

To apply for this position, please contact Kristen Slaven, Director of Social Services at [kslaven@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:kslaven@baptistchildrensvillage.com). Applications are available at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com). Please complete and send it, along with a statement of faith and a resume copy to Ms. Slaven at 114 Marketridge Drive, Ridgeland, MS 39157.

## BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent openings, please contact Celeste Cade at [ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com](mailto:ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com) or 601-922-2242.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com).



## Humanity's Fall • Genesis 3:1-7, 14-19

God's word reveals in Genesis 3 where sin originated. We know the story, so let us examine the players in the drama of the fall of humanity. The story includes The Deceiver.

In the Garden of Eden he is called a serpent, but he is clearly Satan. Revelation 12:9 reads, "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him," (KJV). He is known throughout the Scripture as the deceiver. The first time he is mentioned is here, deceiving Adam and Eve. The last we hear of him is Revelation 20:10, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever," (KJV). He is described the first time and last time as the deceiver.

He still deceives us today. Satan deceived Adam and Eve by humanizing God and deifying man, which still his favorite trick to deceive us all. "You can be like God!" Psalms 95:6-7 reads, "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the

sheep of his hand," (KJV). We are deceived when we believe his lies and attempt to usurp God's position as Lord of our lives.

Jesus described Satan in John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," (KJV). The thief stole the innocence of Adam and Eve; killed them physically, for they began to die the day they sinned; and he destroyed their relationship with God. He still steals, kills, and destroys.

The second players in the drama were The Deceived. Adam and Eve listened to the deceiver instead of the Lord God. Their disobedience sowed the seeds of sin throughout the entire human race. Some people would eventually assist the deceiver. 2 Timothy 3:13 reads, "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiv-

ing, and being deceived," (KJV). Jesus confronted the religious leaders of His day in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it," (KJV). The deceived become de-

ceivers. Our hearts are corrupt, as Jesus said in Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders,

adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," (KJV), and as revealed in Jeremiah 17:9-10a, "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart," (KJV).

The third player in our sad drama was there, though not visible to the humans. He is The Deliverer.

After the fall and after God pronounced judgment on the guilty, Gen-

esis 3:21 reads, "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them," (KJV). God killed animals to cover Adam and Eve. Hebrews 9:22b reads, "and without shedding of blood is no remission," (KJV). God shed blood to cover the fallen first couple. This was a picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would pay with His precious blood for our sins, and "not only ours, but the sins of the whole world." (1 John 2:2 KJV).

Revelation 13:8 reveals, "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," (KJV). Before Adam and Eve were deceived, the Deliverer shed His blood for our sins. Romans 6:17 reads, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you," (KJV). The thief still seeks to steal, kill, and destroy through deception. Don't be deceived. The Deliverer Jesus offers you salvation today. It is still your choice- the deceiver or the Deliverer?

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.



### Explore the Bible with Rick Henson

## God's Promise of Provision • Psalm 34:4-14

How would you define "the good life"? A carefree beach vacation, a job you enjoy, good health, a comfortable home with a loving family?

Recently, I read about Ben Schlappig. This 25-year-old entrepreneur, has been hopping on airplanes by himself and traveling wherever he wishes since age 15. Developing an early fascination with flying, he's learned to combine airline deals, credit card incentives, and bumped-flight offers to rack up astronomical frequent-flyer miles. Now, he spends his life traveling the world (at no cost to himself), and teaching others how to find incredible money-saving travel deals.

That same week, I saw a video of a school of deaf orphans. Young boys, each seated before a plain bowl of rice, were seen with rapt expressions on their faces, signing thanks to God for their meal.

Obviously, the good life means different things to different people. As believers, we have the ultimate good life! Scripture - and our own experience - overflows with examples of God's provision in both the big and little things of life. Today's Scripture provides an overview of this subject.

Psalms 34 begins with David praising, exalting, and boasting about the Lord's goodness (v. 1-2). He invites others to join his exuberant thanksgiving. When David was fleeing from the

jealous and relentless King Saul, he experienced the Lord's hand of provision and protection. In addition to being rescued physically, David says God "delivered me from all my fears" (v. 4 NKJV). Sometimes the slavery of fear is as oppressive as the actual event we may face. Part of God's provision includes His peace. Verse 5 says those who experience that are "radiant with joy" (HCSB).

Verse 7 mentions the "Angel of the Lord". David says He "encamps all around those who fear Him". This is no mere angel...such a one could not encamp all around a person! Throughout the Old Testament, appearances of the Angel of the Lord refer to God Himself. The word "encamp" evokes thoughts of a fortified area.

In the next verses, David challenges readers to check out his claims themselves: "taste and see that the Lord is good", he declares. Those who honor the Lord will see their needs met. In nature, even strong young lions may lack food (v. 10), but those who set

their hope in God "shall not lack any good thing" (v. 10). Jesus expanded on this teaching in Matthew 6:25-34.

Since we have expectations of our Heavenly Father to care for us, does He have expectations of us? Absolutely. We've already looked at some of our responsibilities: to fear him (reverential awe), seek Him, call on Him, and such. David, in verses 11-14 invites "you children" (probably his dearly-loved comrades) to gather for some discipleship:

"I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (v. 11). To enjoy the scriptural version of the "good life", David first cautioned

his protégés (and us) to watch their speech. We're to refrain from evil and deceitful speech. This could include such things as slander, gossip, lying, and cursing. A second part of this teaching time focused on fleeing evil, doing what is good, and pursuing peace (v. 14). This was obviously not a "Do as I say, not as I do" admonition. In Psalm 141:3-4, David begs the Lord to "set a guard" and "keep watch" over his servant's speech, and also to keep

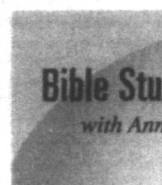
his heart from being involved with evil things, and those who engage in them.

So how can we identify the evil to avoid and the good to pursue? Being faithful to Scripture study (2 Timothy 3:16) and earnest prayer (Hebrews 4:16; Jeremiah 33:3) will keep us on the right path.

Last month was the tenth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina. Many looked back, recalling the seeds of hope dispersed after the swirling waters receded. Our pastor spoke of God's abundant and incredible provision for those in desperate situations. Thousands of volunteers and millions of dollars of supplies poured in over not just months, but years. He shared this quote by Billy Graham: "We can be certain that God will give us the strength and resources we need to live through any situation in life He ordains. The will of God will never take us where the grace of God cannot sustain us."

God provides! Chuck Bentley, of Crown Financial Ministries, reminds us, "The promises from our faithful God are the only true security any of us have." Have you given thanks for the Lord's incredible, abundant provisions? There's no time like the present!

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



### Bible Studies for Life with Ann Maniscalco



Dwight Faulkenberry, speaker; Gary Dover, music.

► **Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County:** Revival, Sept. 20 - 23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.

-- Wed., 7 p.m.; Harvey Reeves, speaker; Sandra Smith, music; Tommy Inmon, pastor.

► **Belle Fountain Church, Ocean Springs:** 125th anniversary, Sept. 20; services, 10:45 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and worship service and reception; Larry Darden, pastor.

## Revivals & Homecomings

► **East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, Sept. 20; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal;

# LifeWay Research: Pastorates stable, but concerns persist

**NASHVILLE (BP)** — Though pastors are stressed about money and ministry demands, only one percent abandon the pulpit each year, LifeWay Research finds.

LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, surveyed 1,500 pastors of evangelical and historically black churches and found an estimated 13% of senior pastors in 2005 had left the pastorate 10 years later for reasons other than death or retirement.

The study, released Sept. 1, was gathered from a survey conducted March 5-18.

"Pastors are not leaving the ministry in droves," said Scott McConnell, LifeWay Research vice president. Still, pastors say the role can be tough:

- 84% say they're on call 24 hours a day.
- 80% expect conflict in their church.
- 54% find the role of pastor frequently overwhelming.
- 53% are often concerned about their family's financial security.
- 48% often feel the demands of ministry are more than they can handle.
- 21% say their church has unrealistic expectations of them.

"This is a brutal job," McConnell said. "The problem isn't that pastors are quitting. The problem is that pastors have a challenging work environment. Churches ought to be concerned, and they ought to be doing what they can."

The survey, commissioned by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Alpharetta, Ga., and Richard Dockins, an occupational medicine physician in Houston, Texas, concerned about pastoral attrition, also examined why pastors leave the ministry and what can be done to support pastors.

## Calling it quits

Looking back at the leadership of their church 10 years earlier, today's pastors report relative stability. Forty-four percent say they were pastor of their current church 10 years ago, and 12% say the pastor from 2005 now leads another church. Ten percent of pastors from 2005 have retired, and three percent have died.

Small segments have left the pastorate, current pastors say. Two percent shifted to non-ministry jobs, and five percent stayed in ministry but switched to non-pastoral roles. Combined, those two groups account for known losses of less than one percent a year.

In some cases, current pastors didn't know who led the church 10 years earlier (16%) or weren't sure of the previous pastor's whereabouts (three percent). Assuming those cases follow the same pattern as the known instances, McConnell estimates a total of 29,000 evangelical pastors have left the pastorate over the past decade, an average of fewer than 250 a month.

Current pastors say a change in calling is the top reason their predecessors left the pastorate, accounting for 37% of departures. Conflict in the church, something 64% of pastors experienced in their last church, is the second most common reason at 26%.

Other reasons pastors have left the pastorate include family issues (17%), moral or ethical issues (13%), poor fit (13%), burnout (10%), personal finances (eight percent), and illness (five percent). Lack of preparation for the job was cited in three percent of cases.

## Switching churches

Many senior pastors are relatively new to their current churches. Thirty-five percent have been there five years or less but most are not new to the pastorate. Fifty-seven percent of current senior pastors previously held that role elsewhere.

Most said they moved on because they had taken the previous church as far as they could (54%). However, 23% of pastors who changed churches say they left because of conflict in the church. Church conflict often took multiple forms in pastors' last churches, including significant personal attacks against 34% of the pastors.

Pastors also reported conflict over changes they proposed (38%), their leadership style (27%), expectations about the pastor's role (25%), and doctrinal differences (13%). Thirty-eight percent faced conflict with lay leaders, and 31% found themselves in conflict with a church matriarch or patriarch.

More than a third of pastors (34%) say they left a previous church because their family needed a change. One in five found the church did not embrace their approach to ministry (19%). Pastors also cited poor fit and unrealistic expectations (18% each) as reasons for leaving. Some were reassigned (18%) or asked to leave (eight percent).

## Family issues

On the surface, pastors' responses about their families are quite positive, yet many indicate things could be better by agreeing only "somewhat." More than nine in 10 married pastors say their spouses are enthusiastic about life in ministry together (63% agree strongly, 31% somewhat), have found a fulfilling ministry in the church (65% agree strongly; 26% somewhat), and are very satisfied with their marriage (82% agree strongly; 16% somewhat).

Twenty percent of pastors say their family resents the demands of pastoral ministry, and more than a third (35%) say the demands of ministry prevent them from spending time with their family.

## Protecting themselves

The demands of ministry require pastors to protect themselves, they say. Ninety-four percent consistently protect time with their family. Nine in 10 regularly listen for signs of conflict in the church, and 92% make deliberate efforts to prevent conflict.

Although they typically work on others' traditional day of rest, 85% of pastors say they unplug from ministerial duties to rest at least one day a week. The majority (59%) find seven or more occasions a week for private Bible study and prayer unrelated to preparing sermons or lessons.

Caution is warranted when counseling, says Adam Mason, minister of counseling services for First Church in Houston, Texas. "It's almost always the minister beginning the process of counseling a person of the opposite sex, and the emotional support that they give each other through the counseling process, that leads to an inappropriate physical relationship."

More than three-quarters of pastors say they have another staff member present when counseling those of the opposite gender (78%) and refer people to a professional counselor if the situation requires more than two sessions (76%).

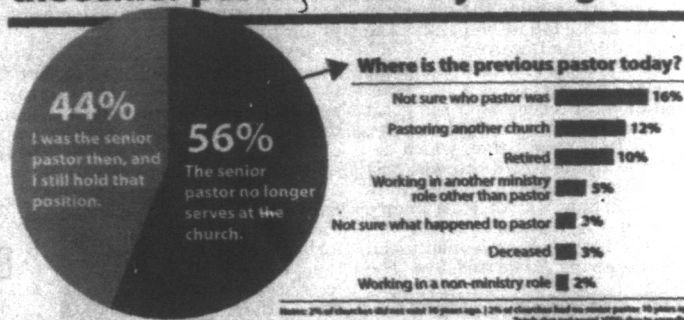
Most say they have received training in counseling, including graduate school courses (52%), conferences (64%), and books or articles (90%).

For their own emotional well-being, pastors say they openly share struggles at least once a month with a source of support such as their spouse (90%), a close friend (74%), another pastor (71%), or a mentor (42%).

Help is available in a variety of forms. Care4Pastors.com has numerous resources for pastors and churches who desire to support their pastor. Focus on the Family's pastoral care team is available to provide supportive direction at (844) 4PASTOR1.

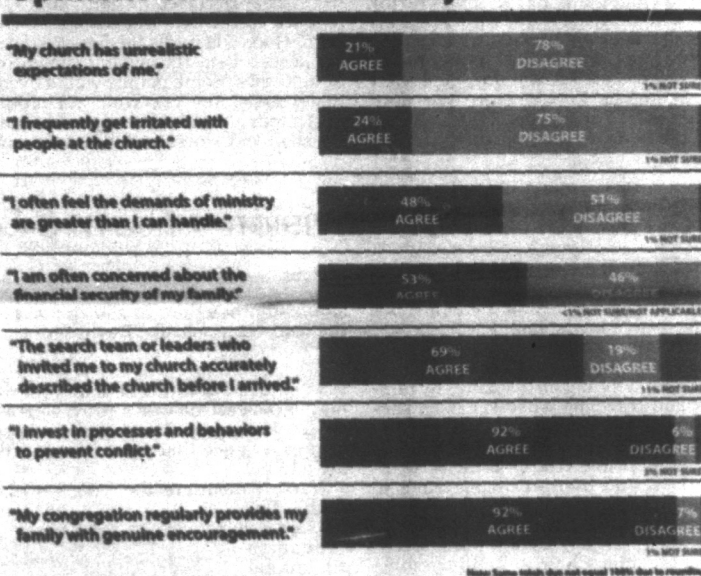
Among evangelical pastors:

## In your current church, where is the senior pastor from 10 years ago?



Among evangelical pastors:

## Opinions on life and ministry



Among evangelical pastors:

## Why did you leave your last church?

